

the potential of women, and improving the community; and the women of Gainesville and Hall counties have certainly demonstrated during the past half century that hard work and good spirits can make a powerful difference in the community that we live in.

The Gainesville-Hall County chapter of the Junior League was founded by Ms. Idalu Haugabook Slack and chartered on May 21, 1951. The group began making a strong impact then, and I am proud to report that their work has not only continued but has intensified since that time. In 1951, the 21 charter members donated some 515 hours of community service. This year's membership donated over 8,000 hours, all while raising some \$80,000 in a single year.

Early projects from the Gainesville-Hall County Junior League included services to the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, a story hour for children at the Hall County Library, and school lunches for less fortunate children. In 1952, this strong group of women began two permanent projects as well, the Green Hunter Homes Nursery, and the Charity Ball. Their list of accomplishments continued through the years, and in 1954 the first "Fall Thrift Sale" began.

The Junior League of Gainesville-Hall County has a special tradition of helping children with speech problems. After spending 4 years transporting children to the Atlanta Speech School, the members retained a speech correctionist to allow the children of Gainesville and Hall counties to get help closer to home. In the early 1970s, the Northeast Georgia Speech and Hearing Center was opened, and I had the honor of serving on that first board of directors. The Junior League also donated money for newborn intensive care equipment.

In recent years, the Junior League of Gainesville-Hall County underwrote a \$30,000 grant to help open a new child advocacy center and has participated in the massive restoration of the Gainesville Civic Center. Joining with the Association of Junior Leagues International, health concerns emerged as major initiatives and projects were begun, including the creation of a mobile health van and the hosting of a Child Welfare Forum. History shows that the women of Gainesville-Hall County Junior League are able to continue old projects even as they engage in new endeavors that help our community.

Mr. Speaker, one of the main problems of the Junior League is demonstrating the effectiveness of trained volunteers, and they are certainly doing a great job at it. League members have a strong history as State and community leaders, and I commend the Gainesville-Hall County Junior League for their continuing legacy of service and achievement.

REMEMBERING THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BONIOR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, earlier today tens of thousands of Armenian mourners gathered on the hilltop over the city of Yerevan, the capital of Armenia, to remember the Armenian genocide.

Here in the United States, in the Capitol, we also are remembering. It often seems that the world has not learned the crucial lessons of the past. We have witnessed awful genocides in nearly every corner of the globe, including the Holocaust of the Jews in Europe, and genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, and Bosnia.

We must pause today and say, "Never again." We must, because the cost of the alternative is too high.

Eighty-six years ago in 1915, 1.5 million Armenians were killed; 300 Armenian leaders, writers, thinkers and professionals in Constantinople, modern day Istanbul, were rounded up, deported and killed. 5,000 of the poorest Armenians were butchered in the streets and in their homes.

Most Armenians in America are children or grandchildren of those survivors although there are still many survivors amongst us today. I sometimes hear voices that ask, "You know, after all of these years, why do we need to keep addressing this?" After all, some of the skeptics say, this was something that ended back in 1915 and the 1920s.

I suppose that someone who thinks of genocide with that kind of detachment, as if it were just something in a textbook, some distant memory, as something that happened far away and long ago to a people that they never knew, that argument might sound reasonable. But the reason we are here today with my colleagues is because we know better, because we know that 1.5 million men, women and children who were murdered in the genocide are not some abstraction, are not some number in a textbook. To those who survived them, they were beloved family members and dear friends. They were our fathers and mothers and grandparents and uncles and aunts and confidants and neighbors. They were individuals who were robbed of their dignity, they were robbed of their humanity; and finally, they were robbed of their lives.

While time has made the events more distant, the pain is no less real today than it has ever been. How can it be otherwise when we hear the stories of the survivors. How can it be when we are haunted by the words of women like Katharine Magarian. Just listen. Three years ago she said, "I saw my father killed when I was 9 years old. We lived in an Armenian enclave in Turkey in the mountains. My father was a

businessman. The Turks, they ride in one day, got all of the men together and brought them to the church. Every man came out with hands tied behind them. They slaughtered them, like sheep, with long knives.

"They all die. Twenty-five people in my family die. You cannot walk, they kill you. You walk, they kill you. They did not care who they killed. My husband, who was a boy in my village but I did not know him then, he saw his mother's head cut off," and she goes on describing the atrocities that befell her and her family.

To most Americans these stories are things that, maybe, you have heard about or read about. But anyone who grew up in an Armenian American family will tell you they knew about these stories their whole life. They may not have always known the specifics, but they always knew about the pain and hurt and tears. They know there were members of their family who died. Why did they die? Because they were Armenian.

Mr. Speaker, that is why we commemorate the genocide. It is not because we cannot let go of history, it is because history will not let go of us. We know that silence does not bind up wounds, it only leaves those wounds to fester. Because we understand if Turkey is never held accountable for the crimes it committed in the past, it only becomes more certain that those crimes will occur again in the future.

Some in Congress and the White House believe that by speaking out on the genocide, America would be betraying the Turkish government. By failing to speak out, we are betraying our own principles as a free people. We cannot sit idle. We cannot let Turkey hide within a fortress of lies.

Mr. Speaker, that is why we will be introducing our resolution on the Armenian genocide. I would like to share an old Armenian saying with you. The saying is: "Many a molehill thinks it is a mountain. But the mountain? Mountains are too busy being mountains, doing mountain-type things and thinking mountain-type thoughts to worry about what being a mountain means."

I think of America as sometimes being a bit like that mountain. We are a Nation that is so busy with our economy, our culture and politics, we sometimes forget what it is like to be really an American, what it means to be an American. And the way I see it, America means standing up for justice. America means speaking out against injustice.

□ 1900

That is what I urge all of my colleagues to do, and join me in recognizing the Armenian genocide and supporting the resolution.

Recognizing inhumanity is the first step toward healing and understanding. The current tensions between Turkey, Azerbaijan, and Armenia are deeply rooted in its history, and

achieving a just and lasting peace and cooperation will only be possible if the past is acknowledged. But it will not happen on its own. That's why congressional action on the Armenian Genocide resolution is so important.

I believe that those of us who stand for human rights and dignity have a responsibility to remember the victims and the survivors. We have a responsibility to speak out and to make sure that tragedies like this are never allowed to happen again.

In remembering the Armenian Genocide, we are making a commitment against genocide and discrimination. We are making a personal commitment to speaking out against injustice wherever we see it.

COMMEMORATING ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. RADANOVICH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be here this evening to honor my Armenian friends, particularly on the eve of the 86th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

The 20th century was one of historic progress, but also horrible brutality. Throughout the century, America has also been the source of this progress, as well as the nation of first resort to combat brutality around the world. The first great American diplomatic and humanitarian initiative of the 20th century was in response to the attempted extermination of the Armenian people.

As I did last year on this date, I want to associate my comments with the comments of the Jerusalem Post which said, "The 1915 wholesale massacre of the Armenians by the Ottoman Turks remains a core experience of the Armenian nation. While there is virtually zero tolerance for Holocaust denial, there is tacit acceptance of the denial of the Armenian Genocide, in part because the Turks have managed to structure this debate so that people question whether this really did happen."

It is fact that the death of 1.5 million Armenians by execution or starvation really did happen, and we must not tolerate this denial.

Mr. Speaker, I say we must affirm history, not bury it. We must learn from history, not reshape it according to the geostrategic needs of the moment, and we must refuse to be intimidated or other states with troubled

past will ask that the American record on their dark chapter in history be expunged.

As Members of this body, we have an obligation to educate and familiarize Americans on the Armenian Genocide. In fact, we must assure that the genocide is remembered so that this human tragedy will not be repeated.

As we have seen in recent years, genocide and ethnic cleansing continue to plague nations around the world and, as a great nation, we must always be attentive and willing to stand against such atrocities. We must do the right thing and call upon our human decency to commemorate the Armenian Genocide. We must take our role as the leader of the Free World seriously and educate people on the systematic and deliberate annihilation of 1.5 million Armenians. We must characterize this as genocide.

A key element of the record of the American response to this crime against humanity consists of the reports of our ambassador and his consular officials throughout what are now central and eastern Turkey. This record is a priceless tool in the hands of any American concerned with or responsible for our Nation's ongoing global role to prevent genocide and ethnic cleansing. Therefore, I will tomorrow will be introducing a strong bipartisan resolution to bring together all of the U.S. records on the Armenian Genocide and to provide this collection to the House Committee on International Relations, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, and the Armenian Genocide Museum in Yerevan, Armenia.

U.S. Archives contain extensive documentation of the widespread opposition to Ottoman Turkey's brutal massacres and deportations. They also contain records of the unprecedented efforts of the American people to bring relief to the survivors of the 20th century's first genocide. In introducing this legislation, we challenge those who will deny the genocide, past or present. I urge my colleagues to please add their names as an original cosponsor.

Finally, I would like to close by expressing my sincere hope that we will have President Bush's support on this initiative. During his campaign he pledged to properly commemorate the Armenian Genocide. I have every reason to believe that he will honor that pledge and do what is right for both the Armenian people and for our historical record.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues in commemorating one of the most appalling violations of human rights in all of modern history—the eighty-sixth anniversary of the Armenian genocide.

I want to commend my colleagues Representative JOE KNOLLENBERG of Michigan and Representative FRANK PALLONE of New Jersey, the co-chairs of the Congressional Cau-

cus on Armenian Issues, for sponsoring this special order.

Today, I want to acknowledge this dark moment in history and remember the Armenian people who tragically lost their lives. We must always remember tumultuous moments in history when people suffered because they were different.

The Armenian genocide lasted over an eight-year period from 1915 to 1923. During this time, the Ottoman empire carried out a systematic policy of eliminating its Christian Armenian population. The Armenian genocide was the first of the 20th century, but unfortunately, not the last.

The atrocious acts of annihilation against the Armenian people were denounced by Paris, London and Washington as war crimes. Even the Germans, the Ottoman Empire's ally in the First World War, condemned these heinous acts. Henry Morgenthau, the U.S. Ambassador to Constantinople at the time, vividly documented the massacre of 1.5 million Armenians.

Winston Churchill used the word "holocaust" to describe the Armenian massacres when he said: "in 1915 the Turkish government began and ruthlessly carried out the infamous general massacre and deportation of Armenians in Asia minor . . . [the Turks were] massacring uncounted thousands of helpless Armenians—men, women, and children together; whole districts blotted out in one administrative holocaust—these were beyond human redress."

This orchestrated extermination of a people is contrary to the values the United States espouses. We are a nation which strictly adheres to the affirmation of human rights everywhere and cannot dispute a horrendous historical fact by ignoring what so many witnessed and survived.

Recognition and acceptance of any misdeed are necessary steps towards its extinction. Without acceptance there is no remorse, and without remorse, there is no catharsis and pardon.

Even as recently as the last year of this millennium, the United States, together with many European nations, took active part in putting a stop to the genocidal events in Kosovo. It demonstrates that we are willing to risk our lives in order to remain true to our long tradition of intolerance to tyranny and injustice. We cannot remain silent and turn our face away from similar events that took place against the Armenian people.

Of course, we all want to forget these horrific tragedies in our history and bury them in the past. However, it is only through painful process of acknowledging and remembering that we can keep similar dark moments from happening in the future.

At the end of my statement, I have included several quotes from prominent world leaders and political figures, including several U.S. presidents, who describe and sadly affirm what happened to the 1.5 million Armenians in the Ottoman Empire eighty-six years ago.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask that as we take a moment to reflect upon the hardships endured by the Armenians, we also acknowledge that in the face of adversity the Armenian people have persevered. The survivors of the genocide and their descendants